



USAFE Airman Information File

February 2004

VALUE THE DIFFERENCES

Whether flying and fixing airplanes, defending our installations, or performing other mission-essential support functions, when serving with USAFE overseas we all serve as American Ambassadors. We represent our Air Force and the United States of America to our NATO allies, host nations, and other international partners with every thought expressed, word spoken, and action taken. The strength of our relationships goes a long way towards enabling stability and peace throughout Europe and our area of operations. Our coalition is growing larger and more diverse, but as long as we value the differences and strive for mutual understanding, we'll continue to prosper.

Valuing the experiences, perspectives, and approaches our international partners bring to the fight begins with recognizing, acknowledging, and respecting our differences. Our varied work methods, communication styles, and personal values feed each other and give our coalition greater depth and breadth. It doesn't take long to figure out that working effectively with our international partners is essential to our mission and the Global War on Terrorism. Afford our international partners the respect they deserve based on their experience and proficiency -- do not judge our allies' technical competence on their ability to speak the English language. How many of us can speak two or more languages fluently?

In order to foster relationships we must pursue mutual understanding with determination. It is important to step outside of our comfort zones to overcome language barriers and understand each other clearly on each and every topic. Question constantly, from all perspectives, whether or not assumptions are creating barriers. Are we communicating openly and clearly? Are words or actions being misinterpreted? The true measure of whether or not we are on the same frequency lies in the execution of coalition operations and exercises. Our successes clearly indicate there is strength in our relationships and our commitment to understand each other.

The same principles apply to our relationships with our sister services. As airmen, we need to understand how our different service components complement each other to make our military the strongest in the world. We need to appreciate Army, Navy, and Marine Corps contributions before we can understand and communicate the role of air power in joint operations. At times, achieving a common point of view among our services may be as challenging as gaining mutual understanding with our international partners.

Our NATO allies, host nations, international partners, and sister services expect no more of our airmen than we expect of them . . . to strive for mutual understanding and to appreciate our tapestry of cultures and experiences. Be open to alternative views and value the difference!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Doc Foglesong".

General Doc Foglesong

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Gary Coleman".

CMSgt Gary Coleman

"Bring Your Courage"